

## Behavior Crisis Management Tool #12

### Removal of the Audience

#### Purpose

The purpose of this issue of the Classroom Management Series is to explain how not to allow yourself to get caught in a confrontation with a student who refuses to listen while in class.

#### Examples

Mrs. Janus is getting frustrated because Alasandro has been talking all day and is not getting her subtle looks or non verbal indications to stop talking. She then asks him to please stop talking to his neighbor and the whole class turns to him to see what he is going to do. He responds that he is not and she can't make him. At this point Mrs. Janus is caught in a bind and could lose if she handles it incorrectly.

Mr. Stanos tells Maria to be quiet and pay attention. Matia, 14 years old with emotional disturbance does not want to look bad in front of her peers so she ignores him. Mr. Stanos get furious and threatens her with all sorts of repercussions but she still doesn't back down.

Mrs Willow asks John politely to please try to not talk to the girl next to him. John hears her and wants to comply but doesn't want to look weak in front of the girl so he says , "What if I don't want to?" Mrs. Willow, despite her sensitivity is caught in a bind.

#### What May Not Work

What may not work in any of these cases is to confront the individual in front of the audience. Individuals with emotional problems have a very hard time backing down when caught in front of their peers. While many do not want to take it further, their weak self esteem cannot offer them suitable ways of backing off. Caught by a sense of public humiliation, peer embarrassment versus teacher consequence, the individuals will usually opt for teacher consequence. Needless to say this can present a very dangerous position for a teacher. Individuals who have a weak self esteem draw "strength" from an audience and have to play to that audience despite the serious consequences. What this can mean for a teacher is that the student will take it as far as possible without backing down.

## Try This

Keeping in mind that the student draws "power" from the audience you have several options to consider:

- **Step 1** - You should always offer the student the option of settling him/herself down. However, the problem as well as the solution is all in your delivery. At first you can make a general statement to the class about the difficulty you have in doing your job when talking is going on. Pause and temporarily stare at the student after looking around the room. If that helps then the problem is solved. If not go to Step II.
- **Step II** - If the student continues approach his/her desk (See Proximity Teaching Tool) and teach the lesson right next to his/her desk. That will hopefully help. If that does not go to step III.
- **Step III** - Go your desk, take a minute and write a note suggesting that he/she cooperate and that you cannot allow him/her to continue doing this. Continue teaching and place the note on his/her desk. The privacy will allow the student to save face. If this does not work and the student is defiant go to step IV.
- **Step IV** - Go over to the desk and ask to speak with the student outside. If he/she follows then behind closed doors say, " I can no longer allow you to continue this behavior in class. If you choose to continue I will be forced to take action. I hope you do not choose to continue so I can do my job. Do you understand." Hopefully that will work. However, the ultimate nightmare is in Step V.
- **Step V** - You might ask what happens if the student refuses to follow me outside? In that case ask the assistant to remove the class except for the student. Ask the aid to take the class into the hall and isolate the student. At that point follow Step IV. If he/she is still defiant you will have no choice but to get an administrator and let the student know that it is his/her decision not to follow the rules and his/her decision to receive the consequence. Never let them blame you for their opposition or defiance.